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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4390  
INFO RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 8915  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 3756  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 9939  
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 8798  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 8570  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 5765  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC 0707  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS BEIJING 000119

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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BANGKOK FOR REO AND CDC  
HHS FOR OGHA - STEIGER, HICKEY  
CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID AND COGH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [EAGR](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: BEIJING AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE: REPORTED OUTBREAK IN  
POUTRY IN XINJIANG AUTONOMOUS REGION (FAR NORTHWEST) OF CHINA.

REF A) BEIJING 7567 (2007)

B) GUANGZHOU 1279 (2007)

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Chinese authorities confirmed in the domestic and international media that there had been an outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza amongst poultry in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region beginning December 29, 2007. Reports indicated a die-off of about 5,000 birds and control measures culling a further 30,000 birds leading to their pronouncement that the outbreak has been put under control. No human cases have been identified in association with this report, nor elsewhere in China. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Xinhua and Reuters media outlets reported this week that the Chinese authorities confirmed an avian influenza (AI) outbreak in poultry in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, (northwestern part of China) around the city of Turpan. Apparently beginning around December 29, 2007, 4,850 birds had died by the time of the first media report on January 4, 2008. Provincial authorities culled an additional 29,833 birds to try and prevent further spread of the virus. Unidentified provincial agricultural officials from Xinjiang were quoted in the Reuters reports as suggesting/blaming this recent poultry outbreak on the warmer winter which was bringing more migratory birds to the areas surrounding Turpan, quote "increasing the chances of bird flu outbreaks," end quote because, rather than flying further south, the migratory birds stayed near the city due to the warmer weather experienced so far this winter in Xinjiang.

¶3. (U) The official notification from the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) received by the Embassy on January 4, 2008, indicated that this outbreak was confirmed by the National AI Reference Laboratory (in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province) through virus isolation, RT-PCR and IVPI methods as influenza type A H5N1. Furthermore, this notification reported that the local government took additional measures including: establishing quarantine of the outbreak area, carrying out disinfection measures, culling of poultry and vaccination of all susceptible poultry within a 5 Km radius area of the original dying flocks. The Vice Minister of Agriculture Gao Hongbin responding to questions from the media at a State Council press conference on January 8, 2008 stating, quote "The Xinjiang outbreak has been well controlled; the Ministry of Agriculture is closely monitoring animal diseases including AI. Once an outbreak is

found, the Ministry of Agriculture will take strict measures to control and prevent spreading of the epidemic" end quote. Local farmers were also put under observation by local health officials to assure they didn't develop symptoms or illness. To date no such reports have been shared.

¶4. (U) The last reported outbreak in poultry reported was in Guangdong Province in September 2007, when some 10,000 ducks died and about 30,000 others were culled in the control response (Ref B). This current poultry report from Xinjiang Province also comes about a month after China reported a family-related cluster (father and son) of H5N1 avian flu in humans (Ref A). The Chinese reported this week that the father completely recovered from his illness in late December and was released from the hospital.

¶5. (U) Comment: As might be expected in the "winter season," increases in reported animal and human cases of H5N1 avian influenza (AI) pick up in China, but over the past year there have not been reports of animal and human AI cases occurring in the same locations around the same time, nor have there been reports of sustained human-to-human transmission in China. The family cluster in Nov-Dec of 2007 (Ref A) was China's first probable human-to-human transmission and transmission was likely the result of the intensive care the father provided to his ill and dying son.

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